## Off-script

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# Off-script

by mini puffs

## Summary

Here's the rundown: Dream is born with a soulmark, just like almost everyone, the words scrawled neatly on his wrist.

You, you're the one.

He doesn't really know what he expected anyway.

Or: The first words your soulmate will say to you are written on your wrist, and Dream doesn't know what to do with his.

#### **Notes**

happy belated birthday to dream!!! congrats to every single one of them on reaching insane milestones, creating amazing vids, being great people, and so much more!!

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- <u>READ THE FIRST PART (Spoiler Alert)</u>, as this can get a bit confusing if you haven't since the scenes here ties in with happens in there
- this is basically part two-ish, as it's dream's POV
- based on that one tumblr post
- tumblr post text: so if in the soulmate au the very first words your soulmate ever says to

you are tattooed somewhere on your body since the day you are born imagine having something like 'man I cant believe dumbledore died' tattooed on you. imagine being spoiled for a book series that doesnt even exist yet. imagine worrying about this dumbledore guy your whole childhood while not knowing who he is. imagine knowing dumbledore dies before jk rowling even thinks about it.

So you finally find your soulmate. After years of knowing that dumbledore dies and the entire franchise being ruined, you find him. You're in the theatre, dumbledore is dead and you hear it. 'Man I can't believe dumbledore died' by a guy walking right by you and in you're rage you shout 'You! You're the one!' The guy stops, looks at you, his own arm to read the words, then back at you and he says, "That's not really how I imagined that being said"

See the end of the work for more notes

Here's the rundown: Dream is born with a soulmark, like almost everyone, the words scrawled neatly on his right wrist.

You, you're the one.

He doesn't really know what he expected anyway.

With a soulmark like that, he's one of the lucky ones as some don't get words at all or get stuck with awfully generic ones like, "Hello" or "How was your day" (he'd die of boredom looking at that), but he's more confused than grateful. They're not exactly words you'd say when you first meet someone, much less when you talk to them, which would mean they had to have crossed paths at least once without talking to trigger the soulmark. The only question is what, what did he do for them to remember him and say those words the next time they meet. Was it how he looked/or would look? Did he help them without saying anything? Did he hurt them by accident? Did he do something dumb, like tripping over a trash can in public and his soulmate remembered him by that for all eternity? What is it? What happens?

Then again, they're *soulmates*. Maybe it's cliché but it's possible that the moment they meet, the planets will align perfectly, a choir of angels will drop down to sing, the world around them will fall away as his soulmate utters those words. It's a much better scenario than the others.

That makes him smile instead, and Dream scribbles out the questions he wrote in the margins. Soulmate frenzy is taking over his school, and he's no different. The whole phenomenon is much more interesting than whatever the unit they're covering is on. Someone out there has their fate linked with his and he can't wait to meet them.

Rereading the sentence one last time, he rolls the sleeves of his hoodie up and looks back to the front of the class.

You, you're the one.

What is he supposed to do with that?

For a weird first sentence, it's said in way too many books and movies.

Dream reads and watches them, spending hours trying to find any story he can get. The phrase is in almost every bad romance novel and romcom and he'd be more surprised if it wasn't. Otherwise, it's in a big series where the protagonist is the Chosen One<sup>TM</sup> and is told that their life purpose is to kill God itself. Sometimes it'll be in a mystery or drama for a dumb plot reason. The only horror movie he's ever watched had the monster speak those words as it murdered the rest of the cast and he has no desire to ever watch one again.

He takes note of them anyway. The current list of scenarios Dream has trying to determine the context of the words grows as the years go by. His ideas can't be too far from what'll happen, and he's had plenty of memorable moments in public that his soulmate might already remember him for (kicking and screaming at a theme park, for instance, not one of his proudest moments).

However, there's one thing he forgot to factor in regarding his soulmark: they're in the twenty-first century, the Internet exists, along with texting and chatting online without the use of *hearing their voice*.

Dream doesn't realize this until later, years after spending hours online every day playing with friends and strangers. He's filled up pages worth of notes on the possibility of his soulmate, only to have it debunked in an afternoon of 1v1-ing people.

"Wait, so you've never considered it?" Bad asks him as the match loads up. Sapnap is in the background, trying to win another round before it's his turn against him. "Like we all texted before we video called each other."

"I don't think anybody calls it that," Dream says.

"Still."

"I didn't," he admits. Dream hits Bad's avatar off a ledge, the game's victory message popping up. "Yes!"

"Dang it." Bad sighs. "Anyway, I gotta go now. See ya."

His icon disappears from the screen and Dream is left in silence. The list he's written down is taped to his monitor as if it's mocking him for not realizing this sooner. It's obvious, in front of him this entire time. How many people has he met in-game? On forums? How many have remembered him that way?

"Hey, I'm back," Sapnap says, jarring Dream out of his crisis. "Aw, Bad left. I didn't even get to say goodbye. Are we gonna duel?"

"Oh, yeah." Dream sends the invite and watches as the two of them get teleported to the arena. To think that his soulmate was someone he probably beat--yeah, talking to each other might not go as well as he thought.

Sapnap hums and an idea strikes him.

"Hey, what are your first words?"

"My first words?" Sapnap repeats, confused. "Uh, I'm pretty sure they were mom or dad."

"Not those ones, you idiot." Dream blocks an incoming attack and runs. "Like the ones on your wrist. Your soulmate's words?"

"Oh, those!" There's a pause, and Dream slaughters Sapnap's character as the victory screen pops up once more. "Dang, GG. Why?"

"I'm just asking, do you have one?" He says. If he remembers the statistics right, 20% of people don't have one which could be off as everyone in his school has one. Weird, he never expected someone he knew didn't. Much less his best friend, which he's known for *years* at this point (but then again, they only learned each other's real names months ago, the milestones of online friendships). "It's okay if you don't wanna tell me."

"Nah, I have one," Sapnap answers. "It's super boring though, like 'Hi, what's your name?""

"Aw," Dream says, semi-disappointed. "Either way, you're a great friend and anyone would be lucky to have you as—"

"Jesus Christ, Dream, it's a *sentence*, it's not a big deal. Nobody even ends up with their soulmate nowadays. But thank you anyway, love you too." He can hear his grin through the mic. "Do you have one?"

"Uh," Dream stops. He glances at his wrist, tracing a thumb over the words before looking back up. "Yeah, I do. It's 'You, you're the one."

Sapnap whistles. "Wow. And they say romance is dead."

"Shut up." He smiles when Sapnap's character falls off the ledge.

"At least yours is better than Bad's--hey!"

Dream smiles, listening to the faint typing on Sapnap's end to get back up. "Wait, what's his?"

"Something about being bald, I think."

They both laugh and Dream's words don't feel that bad now. Maybe he'll meet his soulmate online soon but for now, he's happy with his best friends.

Okay, he's definitely not meeting his soulmate anytime soon.

For such a bizarre choice of words, it gets said almost every week at school. "You, you're the one" when it comes to who didn't write their name on their quiz. "You" when it comes to who skipped class. "You" when it comes to who gets put into detention for the rest of the week.

Dream's barely in his last year of high school when everybody gets hit with another wave of soulmate mania and doesn't think much of it until people start compiling lists of everyone's first words, matching them to others with similar statements. It's a good idea but it backfires horribly when people memorize the others' words, using them to pretend they're soulmates.

Dream feels sick. Or annoyed. Or both. Watching a person's smile go through the five stages of grief in a second while others laugh around them is not something he wants to see every day.

Lucky for him, he's kept his words hidden ever since he started school. It's still terrible to see the hope drain from his classmate's faces though, even more so to watch numerous fights break out over it.

The American education system, being the shit they are, doesn't address these issues. Dream attends school every once in a while and nothing changes, aside from the influx of assignments that he doesn't want to do.

Stuffing his work into his backpack, Dream slings it over his shoulder and walks out. He'll do it the night before it's due or something.

"You."

Dream freezes. Someone taps his shoulder and he slowly turns, expecting a friend or classmate telling him he dropped his pencil or something, but the girl in front of him doesn't ring any bells.

"You're the one," she says.

What.

He stares at her. She's around his height, hair pulled back into a long ponytail that's tangled in her backpack straps (he debates on whether or not to tell her this), and the brightest red shoes he's seen in his life. He's seen enough movies to know that a look like that screams *protagonist*. If they've met before, Dream would have noticed, and for a brief moment, his heart stops because this could be it, she could be the one and his brain scrambles for something to say and—

Until he realizes that she's pointing at his wrist, ignoring his face completely.

"Sorry, you have a nice soulmark!" She gushes. "My first words are 'get out of my way."

He hates roller coasters, how the wind howls in his ears, the way his stomach drops, and the people's screams around him. Dream supposes he might as well be on one, disappointment dragging him down a fifteen-story drop, him screaming internally. The universe wants him to suffer.

"Oh," he says, trying to stay calm despite his mental state. "That sucks."

"Yeah." She nods. The words on her wrist don't match the ones he uttered. Of course. "The TA accidentally gave me your essay by the way."

Handing it to him, Dream's eyes skim over the red pen markings and he shoves it into his bag. "Thanks--"

He looks back up to the girl but she's already gone, lost in the sea of people.

soulmate shenanigan, which he can't blame them for. Not everyone is too set on the idea of finding their partner that may or may not exist and with the kind of sketchy people online, who knows what their motives could be. He'd be lucky if his soulmate doesn't turn out to be a serial killer of some sort.

Dream finishes the rest of his education online after *very* long arguments with his family and school. He's eternally grateful because he never has to set foot on campus ever again, gets to graduate early, and not have to deal with the soulmate senior prank shit. Work isn't any better though, and if he had a dollar every time he had to deal with an annoying customer he'd probably have enough to no longer need a job. There are several soulmark false alarms, like the lady who screamed for him after he did absolutely nothing to her, or the kids who mistook him for some cartoon character after dressing up for Halloween with nothing but a paper plate mask.

Bad is the main person he confides this in, and strangely enough, he's the first one out of everyone Dream knows that has found their soulmate. He admits it one night on call and everyone goes beserk, screaming into their mics and demanding to know who they are.

(As it turns out, his soulmate is pretty nice. The guy annoys Bad but still cares about him at the same time like no other, and their personalities complement each other perfectly. Dream can't bring himself to be jealous like how he normally is with other soulmate couples because he's happy for the two of them and wishes them nothing but the best, even if their arguments are ridiculous.)

Somewhere in the middle of the call, Dream suggests they play a round or two which is how he's currently sitting in his room at almost two AM, slaughtering everyone in the server. He beats almost all of them up, his confidence getting the better of him the latest game as he falls into the void.

"No!" He yells, watching the *Game Over* message appear on his screen.

"Ha!" Bad and his soulmate both scream in unison. Everyone who's already died spam a series of "L's" in the chat, their voices laughing in the call. Dream ignores every single one of them, aside from one that speaks the words inscribed on the back of his hand.

"You, you're the one—"

It's hard to hear with everyone's mics cutting in and out but it's definitely his words, and Dream holds his breath, scrolling through their users to see who's said it. If it really is his soulmate, then he needs to say something fast and he opens his mouth to speak--

"—that killed me!"

"Dammit A6d!" Dream screams, slamming his fist onto his keyboard. It survived much worse. "What the hell?!"

Everyone goes silent. Their confusion is audible, and A6d coughs. "What?" He says.

"You just said—you almost said—I—" Dream sighs, burying his face in his hands. His soulmate's words stare at him, taunting him, laughing at his misfortune because he was *so close* yet so far. "You know what, nothing."

Life is hell. His soulmark sucks.

Summer rolls around. Sapnap visits him and drags him out of his house, the heat burning his skin alive. They spend a couple of days with their other friends around Florida, talking, driving, taking dumb photos that none of them have the intention of posting.

At some point, they go to the movies and since the other movies are horror, Dream buys the tickets to the only non-terrifying yet still engaging movie, practically steering them inside. He doesn't realize what they're watching until it starts.

Harry Potter. Huh. He hasn't touched that series since he was in middle school, but if his memory serves correct, it was really good while it lasted. From opening scenes and a quick glance at their tickets, it's the sixth movie and he sips on his soda, taking it in. Unfortunately, his vocal cords don't agree and hiccups claw their way into his throat, leaving him wheezing at the worst possible timing. At some point, one of the characters literally dies and he hiccups the loudest yet. A quick slap on the back from Sapnap is enough to cure him, and they don't return for the rest of the movie.

Exiting the theater, Dream chucks his drink into the trash and whoops loudly when it lands. Bad and Sapnap are talking about their favorite parts and he catches a small bit of their conversation before chiming in.

"Man, I can't believe Dumbledore died," he says with a sigh.

(Really, he should've been paying more attention, thought before he spoke, looked before he leaped. One sentence, and he managed to screw it up in the worst way imaginable.)

Whatever their reply is, he doesn't get to hear. Someone grabs his arm and spins him around, and Dream looks down at a guy he's never seen before. The glare and imminent rage on his face look unnatural for someone as short as him, and the voice that comes out is so soft-spoken and British that it throws Dream for a loop.

"You, you're the one!" He yells at him.

The first coherent thought that passes through his mind is *what*. Who the hell is this, and why are they saying his soulmate's words? Sliding his sleeve up, Dream sneaks a glance at his words. They're glowing, his entire wrist lighting up in pain and disappearing the next as if it were never there. That didn't happen with the previous soulmark fails, and he blinks, slowly registering everything.

Holy shit, he's his soulmate.

"Huh," he blurts. He looks at his wrist one more time to confirm it. "That's not really how I expected that being said."

Someone's laughing in the background. Dream ignores them, watching with amusement as his supposed soulmate's face turns an alarming shade of red, him covering his face with hands. "I'm sorry, I--my bad, I didn't mean--"

The world sways under his feet. Dream doubles over laughing, a mixture of relief, shock, and

euphoria. He can't believe it—his soulmate is here, standing right in front of him. His chest is tight and he can hear his blood pumping in his ears, adrenaline coursing through his veins. His soulmate sputters, letting go of his arm as if it's on fire. Almost everyone inside must be staring but Dream doesn't care and looks back up at him once the wheezes fade away.

"Oh God, I'm sorry," he apologizes, stifling another laugh. "I ruined the entire series for you, didn't I?"

If his soulmate hates his guts for spoiling it, Dream wouldn't blame him. It explains the extreme reaction earlier and he's sure there'll be a permanent scar on his arm from his grip—his soulmate was a lot stronger than he looked. He mentally braces himself for any outburst but his soulmate takes a moment to reply, mumbling a few words Dream doesn't catch. "Yes," the guy says. "But, uh, I'm just glad I met you right now."

"Me too." He can't stop the grin from creeping onto his face. He hasn't felt this giddy in a long, long time. "I'm Dream."

"George," the guy replies. Now that's a British sounding name if he heard one. George glances up and Dream finally gets a good look at his face, features soft and smile identical to one he must be wearing right now. Dream barely registers the rest of their conversation, focusing on George and him alone. His eyes sparkle and he makes small hand gestures as he talks and it doesn't matter whether or not this guy is his soulmate, Dream can't wait to get to know him better.

When they meet up later, Dream has to pinch himself to assure he's not dreaming, no pun intended. They're at a Japanese restaurant and he's considering going somewhere else until George drags him in and forces him to eat. Sushi's not bad, cold, and slimy in his mouth and he swallows it with water. He's sure they talk for hours and despite his short stature, George is older than him. His British accent is authentic and he lives across the ocean, only around for vacation.

"No wonder I haven't met you," Dream laughs.

George's Harry Potter knowledge is unparalleled. Dream blames it on the fact that he grew up in the country of the series because even though he reads a lot, he's never studied a series so extensively.

"What made you think I was a Hufflepuff?" He asks. For a Potterhead, George was completely wrong with his house sorting.

"Your jacket's yellow," George says, pointing at it.

Dream looks down. "It's green."

"Oh--"

And that's how he learns George is colorblind.

"It's not a big deal," George reassures him. They continue to go through Harry Potter trivia, George answering them all correctly and while pretending to search for a question, Dream takes a quick photo of them. "Stop!"

He reaches for the phone and misses. Dream laughs, refusing to delete it. George isn't looking at the camera and his mouth is open but all in all, it's a nice photo and Dream saves it for later.

"That's not fair," George whines, making a poor attempt to steal the phone and pouting when he fails. Dream may not believe in God but there's one out there somewhere and he has to applaud them for picking him to be his soulmate. "Let me take a photo of you too."

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"Uh. no."
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"Dream."

The way he says his name is soft and airy, like an actual dream itself. "Fine," he says, rolling his eyes "Only one, though."

George grins and holds his phone up (an android, who uses those anymore?). The smile comes easy as he takes the photo, and Dream gets an idea.

"Hold up your hand."

The tilt of his head is adorable. "Why?" George asks.

"Just do it."

Sighing, he does and Dream joins him before taking it. "There," he says triumphantly. He hands the phone over to him. "You can see our soulmarks."

The photo is blurry and his face isn't even in the shot. George stares at him. "Really?"

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"Okay fine, we'll redo it—"
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"Take it on my phone, it's better—"

"—no, android sucks—"

They end up taking it on both of their phones. Seeing as they have each other's numbers, Dream sets it as his contact picture and they continue the rest of their trivia game, George somehow still managing to get every one right.

The first thing Dream does once he gets home is tell his family and he really should've told them in the morning because he's positive their screaming woke the entire neighborhood. They demand to see him and he's lucky they took photos. Fawning over George's appearance, his mother asks when's the wedding and Dream laughs, swiping his phone back from his siblings' wretched hands. They've just met, and he ignores their smug smiles when he calls George later in the evening.

His friends have the same reaction. They're semi-mad at him basically ditching them for the rest of the day but destroy his eardrums and practically interrogate him the entire night after hearing the soulmate situation. At some point, Dream lets George in on the call and he can kiss his sleeping

schedule goodbye as they talk once more. It's weird—George fits right in, and it turns out he's known Bad for a bit, gets on like a house on fire with Sapnap, and his screams deafen everyone's ears at three AM.

"Jesus Christ, aren't you in a hotel or something?" Sapnap says. "Or are you with Dream? Damn you guys are fast—"

"He's in a hotel," Dream answers for him. He can hear George in the background apologizing to whoever's with him and leaving the call. "But we're gonna meet up again tomorrow." After a moment, he asks, "Hey, how much do you know about Harry Potter?"

He may or may not hijack George's family vacation trip, but surprisingly, they take it well and are ecstatic when they meet him. His family is nice and once they meet his own, Dream is pretty sure they're both planning a wedding for them.

"We've literally met like three days ago," George whispers to him, while they're walking on the street twenty feet away from their families. "You'd think they'd be more reasonable."

"What do you mean?"

"I don't know," he says, sighing. "What if we don't see each other ever again after this? Or you find someone else? Or—"

"George," Dream interrupts, stopping to turn and face him. "I promise, I won't do any of that."

"But--"

"I *promise*," he says, firmer. He grabs George's hand and George lets it stay, continuing to walk straight ahead. "Look, we're already so comfortable with each other. Our *families* literally ship us. You're smart too, pretty--pretty nice, and I wouldn't ghost you like that." There's a lot more he wants to say and save it for later, letting the tension ease.

"Well," George chews on the bottom of his lip. Dream squeezes his hand, making him smile. "Yeah, you're right."

"Can we have a rematch of the Harry Potter trivia now?"

"You're *still* on about that?" George asks. He shrugs a second later. "Sure, but don't be mad if I win again."

He wins again. If there were a table nearby, Dream would've flipped it into the stratosphere. George laughs at his defeat, the sound ringing like wedding bells in the distance and he has only his family to thank for that. Either way, he made George laugh, and that's a victory.

He gets his revenge later in a bookstore, the last day before George has to go back home. Don't judge a book by its cover is a lie—Dream can guess the plot of all the books they see just by looking at it. Maybe his predictions are wrong but seeing the pissed look on George's face is priceless.

The look on the cashier after she finds them on the ground surrounded by a pile of books is not.

"We're getting these," he says before she can say anything, holding the two books up. He can see her soulmark, the words, "Hi, I'd like to return this" clear on her wrist. Oh god, customer service is a nightmare Dream never wants to experience again. Poor kid. He feels a little guilty for the trouble they could've caused her. "Sorry about that."

George doesn't let go of his hand even when they exit the store and walk back out into the streets. He's quiet, and Dream briefly replays the moment they had inside for anything he might've said that upset him but to his surprise, George bursts out laughing.

"What's so funny?"

"You," he says, through giggles. "You had to pay for the books—instant karma."

No wonder he's been silent. "You're such an idiot."

"I know more about Harry Potter than you," he tuts. "Who's the idiot now?"

"You, idiot."

George sighs and rolls his eyes as Dream laughs. "You said you didn't expect it to be said like that," he says.

"Said what?"

"That." He holds up their hands as if it isn't obvious enough. Their soulmarks flicker in and out of his vision. "How did you want it to be said?"

Not in the horror movie way, or the adventure and action way. The romance way is too cheesy, and Dream thinks for a minute or two. "The way you said it," he decides.

"What, when I was pissed at you for spoiling the whole series? I'm not over that," George reminds him.

"No, when you said it earlier." He shakes the books in his hands. "On the floor?"

"Oh! You, you're the one, you, you're the one, you, you're the one..."

"You, you're the one," Dream sings along, both of them harmonizing till they reach his car and drive off into the sunset like the end of a coming of age movie.

He reads the books instead of sleeping. Somehow, his predictions are correct and he wraps them up, handing them over to George before they enter the airport.

"What's this?" George asks, shooing the rest of his family away to give them privacy. Dream doesn't care about the attention, but it's nice to see how flustered he gets, his face still a bright shade of pink. A blue and silver scarf wraps around his neck despite how hot it is, a testament to the HP fandom.

"A souvenir. Open it when you get back—" He's already tearing it open, throwing the wrapping paper aside. Dream rolls his eyes heavenward.

"Wha--oh, these are the books from earlier!"

"Yeah." He nods and shoves his hands into his pockets, avoiding his eyes. "You can read them on the plane or something."

George traces a thumb over the cover art. "Thanks," he says.

He opens it up and Dream immediately places his hand on top to stop him. George has spoiled half of the surprise already, he doesn't need to see the rest. "No problem. Tell me what happens?"

"Haven't you read them already?" Stuffing the books into his bag, George stares at him with a twinkle in his eye.

"I wanna know what you think!"

"Mhm." George laughs and leans forward, their foreheads touching. "I think," he says, quieter as if his words are for him and him alone. "I think that *you*," he taps his chest, and Dream wonders if he can hear how loudly his heart is pounding, "shouldn't gift someone a book series that you've spoiled for them."

"Well, I just did." Dream grins. Their family waves at them through the windows and he looks back to George. "I think you have to go now."

Breaking from their embrace, George sighs and rearranges his scarf. "Why is it so hot here?" He groans, his face red from either the heat or him and Dream smiles. "Bye, Dream."

"Bye, George."

Waving at him, Dream makes sure to put his hood up as he watches them leave. They disappear into the crowd and he rubs his eyes, his sleeves now wet. He doesn't remember where he parked, his mind swimming with thoughts of George, George, George, and prepares to cross the street when someone barrels into him.

"Who--" His voice comes out hoarse and Dream wants to scream because he didn't cry *that* much, but the blur of brown hair and blue says at the same time, "You!" grabbing the front of his jacket and Dream doesn't even need to ask who they are because there's no doubt about it. On instinct, he kisses George, wrapping his arms around his waist and lifting him off the ground while the world fades away.

"Sorry," George breathes, breaking away for a moment as Dream lets him back down. "I didn't want to leave without well, *that--*"

"Sorry' isn't something people wanna hear after--" He cuts him off with a quick kiss. "--yeah, I didn't want you to leave either."

George giggles. "You are the one," he says, meaning it fully.

He's aware that George's family is probably nearby and that they have to leave now but he holds his hand right before George can leave. "Say it one more time?"

"I'll say it all you want," George promises. "Just never say mine again."

That makes him laugh. "Man, I can't believe Dumbledore died—"

"Stop, I'm going now!"

Kissing him one last time, George squeezes his hand and Dream looks at their matching soulmarks with a grin. If anyone told him years ago that his soulmate would scream his words at him after a Harry Potter movie, he would've laughed in their face yet here he is now, not wanting to let go. It's not how he expected the words to be said, not the way it's said in movies, shows, or books, but as he watches George disappear inside with his heart hammering in his chest, he has two conclusions:

- 1. Yeah, George is the one.
- 2. And maybe it's okay for things to go off-script.

### **End Notes**

roses are red this took me very long, i admit how the fuck does one write, holy shit

thanks so much for reading! <3 Writing in the fast oneshot style after writing multi chap was a trip holy heck

Please <u>drop by the archive and comment</u> to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!